# 8. TRANSPORTATION PLAN ELEMENT

(Summary of 2025 Plan, adopted in May 2001)



The Lexington Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the organization charged with the responsibility for all aspects of highway and transit planning in the two-county Metropolitan Planning Area (Fayette and Jessamine Counties). The MPO's transportation planning responsibilities are defined under The Federal Highway Act of 1962 and subsequent amendments. The latest is The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. This federal legislation requires urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more to conduct a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated process for the development of transportation improvements. The Act continues previous programs with new initiatives to meet the challenges of improving safety as traffic continues to increase at record levels, protect and enhance communities and the natural environment as we provide transportation, and advance America's economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation. The MPO process is coordinated closely with land use planning, zoning, development, traffic operations, and many other functions within the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government. The MPO structure consists of a Policy Committee, Technical Committee, other subcommittees, and a staff that is within the LFUCG Division of Planning.

Planning efforts of the MPO must also consider the air quality impacts of Scott County to the north (see Section 4.4.5). While Scott County is not officially a part of the MPO planning area, it is part of the MPO Air Quality District designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Separately prepared transportation planning documents require approval of state and federal agencies and are adopted by the Planning Commission by reference in this *Plan Update*. This Chapter is the Transportation Plan Element required by KRS 100 as a part of a locally adopted comprehensive plan. Most of the Chapter is a summary of the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan* recently submitted to the local, state, and federal agencies for approval.

# 8.1 YEAR 2025 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Year 2025 Transportation Plan describes the transportation improvements necessary to support the growing needs of the two-county area (Fayette and Jessamine) from FY-2002 through 2025. MPO Transportation Plans are updated on a three-year planning cycle. The Year 2025 Transportation Plan is considred a working document, which will be used to guide the implementation of actual transportation projects. As envisioned in the 2025 *Plan*, the area's future transportation system will provide for more multi-modal and inter-modal travel, contribute to meeting local and national environmental goals, make travel more equitable among population sectors, and strengthen the area's ability to compete economically. The Year 2025 Transportation Plan updates and supersedes the Year 2018 Transportation Plan published in 1998 and extends the planning horizon from 2018 to 2025. It accounts for real and projected changes since the last transportation plan was published in 1998, including increased population, job related development, future land use plans, and significant increases in travel. The 2025 Transportation Plan is a reassessment of the goals, objectives, community values, and land use plans. The update reaffirms the validity of projects not yet implemented from the Year 2018 Transportation Plan and anticipates transportation needs to year 2025. The previous plan was based upon land use forecasts contained in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan for Fayette County and similar comprehensive plans for Jessamine County and the cities of Nicholasville and Wilmore. The Year 2025 Transportation Plan is based upon the latest land use plans for the same areas.

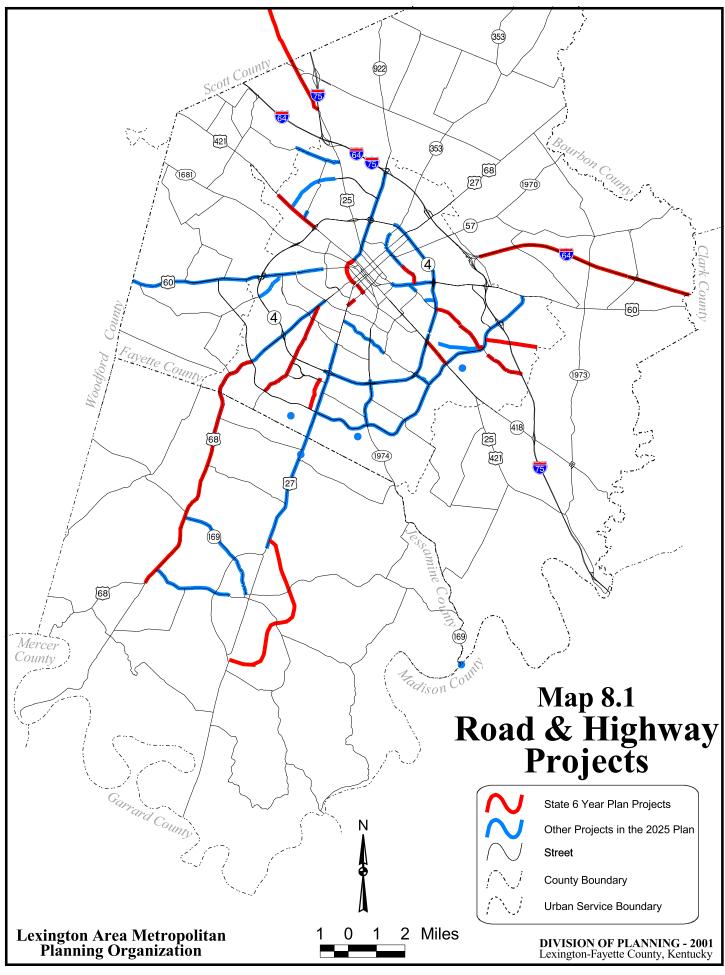
The Year 2025 Transportation Plan consists primarily of the State Six-Year Highway Plan FY 2000 – 2006; a Highway Element with Surface Transportation Program funds for Lexington (SLX) and Non-SLX Funded Projects; Transit Element; and a Bicycle/Pedestrian Element.

Map 8.1 depicts all approved highway and road projects within Fayette County from the 2025 Transportation Plan. The 2025 Transportation Plan focuses upon the major elements of the transportation system, particularly ones that may require state or federal funds for construction or operation. Local comprehensive planning requires consideration of local and collector street systems, as well as the arterials. To this end, this Chapter contains one additional section (Section 8.9) not in the 2025 Transportation Plan related to collector road planning. This has been added to this 2001 Plan Update because of its importance to local planning and implementation decisions. The adopted detailed land use plan maps also show the existing and proposed collector road network. A more detailed description of the elements is found in the following sections.

The Year 2025 Transportation Plan also contains a list of unscheduled (unfunded) transportation needs in an appendix. These unscheduled needs are not a part of recommendations of the financially balanced, air quality conforming Year 2025 Transportation Plan. Not all transportation system deficiencies can be remedied with available funding. The adopted plan prescribes the best use of current funds to meet the most critical needs. All other needs that were identified via the local planning process by the Transportation Technical Coordinating Committee (TTCC) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet have been listed as unscheduled needs in the Year 2025 Transportation Plan's Appendix 4. This list is referred to in future planning efforts and will be updated on a biennial basis as a part of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Six-Year Planning process.



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# **8.2 SIX-YEAR HIGHWAY PLAN:** FY 2000 – 2006

The *Six-Year Plan* is developed by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and revised every two years to coincide with the Kentucky State Legislative session. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet uses the project lists from the rural counties and the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) from urban areas with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop this document. TIPs (see Section 8.3) are 3-year plans for the funding and implementation of transportation improvement projects.

MPOs now have greater authority than ever before; therefore it is important that the TIPs and the State Six-Year Plan be in agreement. The source of all TIP projects must be the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan. The current State Six-Year Plan contains projects for this MPO area based upon the previous TIP and the Year 2018 Transportation Plan (which is superseded by the Year 2025 Transportation Plan). During the plan update process, the projects found in the State Six-Year Plan were tested to confirm their continued validity. All projects within the MPO area included in the State Six-Year Plan and not yet implemented were found to be necessary to reduce traffic congestion and to improve air quality. Therefore, the Year 2025 Transportation Plan includes all State Six-Year Plan projects for the counties of Fayette and Jessamine. Since this accounts for the fiscal years 2000 through 2006, the rest of the Year 2025 Transportation Plan begins where the State Six-Year Plan leaves off.

The adopted SLX (Surface Transportation Program – Lexington Kentucky) projects are projects that will be funded with Federal Surface Transportation Program funds designated for the Lexington Area MPO. Non-SLX projects are projects that will be funded with other sources of funding such as; State Projects, Federal Surface Transportation Program (non SLX), National Highway System (NHS), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds (CMAQ) (For more detailed descriptions of projects and their funding sources, see the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan*).



# 8.3 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) PROCESS

The document used to implement the *Year 2025* Transportation Plan will be the 2002-2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Lexington Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, in cooperation with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), FHWA and other agencies including affected transit operators, will annually develop a TIP. This program will be amended on an "as needed" basis according to a schedule established by the MPO staff and approved by the Transportation Policy Committee. The purpose of this document is to develop a priority list of projects to be carried out within a four-year period following the adoption of each TIP. The TIP is required to contain a financial plan that demonstrates how TIP projects will be scheduled and financed with the fiscal resources likely (or estimated) to be available. Projects that have been implemented are dropped from the TIP project listing as new projects are identified from the Year 2025 Transportation Plan (and future plan updates) and added to the listing during the annual TIP update/revision process. Projects recommended by the Congestion Management Committee must also be included in the TIP.

The annual update of the TIP will be coordinated with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet so that the *State Six-Year Highway Plan* and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are in agreement with the MPO's TIP. It will also include public input as outlined in the MPO Public Participation Process document.

#### 8.4 TRANSIT ELEMENT

In an attempt to balance the current fiscal constraints with the recognized need for improved transit service, the *Year 2025 Transit Plan* recommends two plan phases. These phases are outlined in 8.4.1 and 8.4.2 below. Other features of the *Transit Plan* include the carpool/vanpool program and paratransit for the elderly and disabled. Consideration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is important to transit and mobility planning. Recommendations for Paratransit and Mobility Coordination are outlined separately (see Sections 8.4.3 and 8.4.4).



# 8.4.1 Phase 1 – Maintenance / Improvement Of Existing System

The first phase recommends that the LexTran system continue to provide the current level of service with minor improvements. The primary consideration behind this recommendation is limited fiscal resources. The continued loss of federal operating funds increases the local burden of providing public transportation. In this scenario, LexTran will still need to find additional funding just to maintain the system. This first phase of maintaining the existing system is expected to last until the year 2010. Map 8.2 depicts the approved Transit Routes from the 2025 Plan.

Under this recommendation, only minor route variations are anticipated in Phase 1. Any service changes to the existing route system would be made only to better allocate the limited resources available. The current weekday scheduling of 30-minute headways during peak hour and 60-minute service during midday would be continued. Weekend service would continue to operate on an hourly basis from 6:00 a.m. to 1 a.m. Hourly night service would be available every day of the week until 1:00 a.m. Contracted ADA paratransit service would also continue at its current level of service.

The scheduled improvements in the *Transportation* Improvement Program - FY 2002 - FY 2005 include the continuation of a capital program to purchase new buses for the aging LexTran fleet. The program has scheduled expenditures in each of the four years for this purpose. Funding is also included in the new four-year TIP for new Lex Vans and facility repair. A major capital expenditure will be to rehabilitate the recently acquired LexTran Maintenance Facility, which is adjacent to the existing LexTran facility on Loudon Ave. The project will also include the purchase of up to nine (9) new buses to replace buses that are over 15 years old. This will be done in FY 2002, using Federal Section 5309 funds. Once completed, this facility will provide indoor garage space for all LexTran buses; thus better maintaining the fleet.

LexTran should continue to search for other funding sources in hopes of further expanding and improving the transit system in future years. As it becomes feasible to implement additional changes, the transit alternatives examined in the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan* will be considered for expansion of the LexTran system in Phase 2.

## 8.4.2 Phase 2 – Expansion Of LexTran System

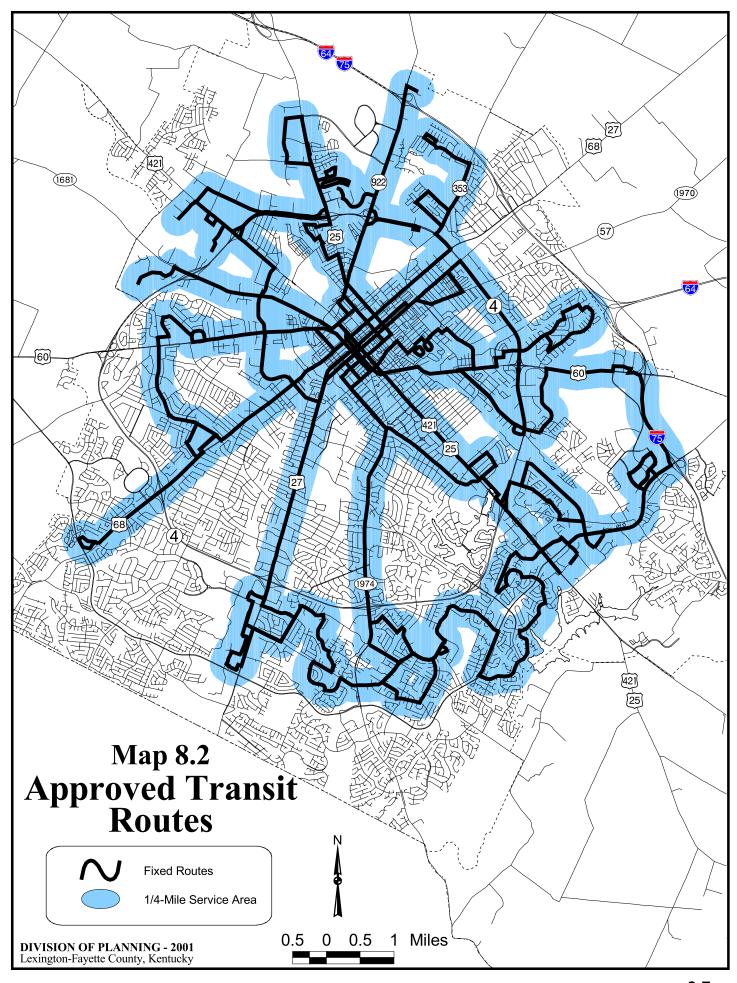
An expansion of the LexTran system cannot occur until a dedicated funding source is established. It is recommended that LexTran and the LFUCG begin now to secure such funding for the transit system. It is anticipated that this will require a referendum for a dedicated tax. To promote all alternative transportation, the LFUCG should consider the possibility of creating a dedicated tax for all types of improvements for a multi-modal transportation system.

The improvements to be implemented during Phase 2 include LexTran core system improvements, system expansion, and express service. These various alternatives are outlined below. Through these improvements, gaps in service will be eliminated and regional needs will be met. Phase 2 is expected to begin in 2010, after funding is secured.

LexTran Core System Improvements

Increased frequency of service is recognized as a key element to enhancing the existing fixed route

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system. Currently, LexTran provides peak service every 30 minutes. Improved frequency of service for peak travel hours during the work week has always been seen as essential to building a strong transit system. This improved service would operate at 15-minute intervals between the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. This change is recommended as the first improvement to the system when a dedicated source of revenue is established.

## Lextran System Expansion

In the transit section of the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan*, transit attractions and generators were identified, and several potential routes suggested. The proposed route additions for consideration in Phase 2 include Airport–Keeneland, Cross Town, Citation, and Alumni. All proposed additions will have a positive impact on the LexTran system and will address communitywide needs. These needs are detailed in the Plan Development chapter of the *2025 Plan*. When funding is in place to initiate Phase 2, it will be necessary to re-evaluate these proposed routes and consider any new needs that emerge over the next decade.

# Express Service / Regional Transit

Fayette County has strong economic links to all of its surrounding counties, as well as Franklin County. As creation of a dedicated funding source is considered, it will be important to consider regional public transportation strategies to meet the demands of the expanding Bluegrass community. This need

may be addressed by establishing express bus service between Lexington and the other counties. Regional linkages with the major town and or employment area of each of the surrounding counties, plus Frankfort, should be considered for such service. The new express routes could meet the commuting needs of both counties involved where a strong interrelationship exists. Any attempt to establish express service between Lexington and surrounding communities will require careful consideration of both the route and stops and the hours of operation. Since such linkages would benefit both counties involved, it is appropriate to examine shared funding for these routes.

These alternatives are discussed in greater detail in the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan*. As the 2000 Census information is released, it will be appropriate to re-evaluate the need for regional transit and to prioritize the development of these routes. Cost estimates will also need to be re-evaluated as the time for implementation approaches. Any express route implementation will be a part of the Phase 2 improvements.

#### 8.4.3 Paratransit

The local paratransit service is provided through a contract with LexTran. This service is in conformance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The last update of the local paratransit plan was submitted in January 1996. The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) determined that the Lexington area's 1996 Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Paratransit Plan Update was in compliance with Federal



regulations, and that future updates were not required. Instead, the Lexington Transit Authority signs an annual assurance that shows continued compliance with requirements in order to receive FTA funding.

The 1996 Transit Plan showed increased demand for paratransit for future years. The document also projected that the entire LexTran fleet would be accessible by 1996 if planned equipment purchases were realized. Through equipment purchases and rehab of older vehicles, the LexTran fleet has been fully accessible since 1998. The increased accessibility of the fixed route system is expected to help meet the growing demand for paratransit service in future years. Continued upgrading of the paratransit and fixed route fleets will be required during the plan period to maintain the quality of service to the disabled population. It is recommended that this paratransit service continue to be provided for all of Fayette County. The alternative of reducing the service area to the required 3/4-mile radius around the fixed routes would negatively impact the quality of service for the disabled community.

## 8.4.4 Mobility Coordination

Established in 1997, the Lexington Bluegrass Mobility Office provides the opportunity to expand the transportation coordination efforts and the continued growth of the MPO's employer based/general public ridesharing program. The following recommendations describe the work activities that will increase the public participation in the services of the Lexington Bluegrass Mobility Office.

It is recommended that a direct and indirect marketing plan be implemented and maintained throughout the plan period. The program is intended to generate increased participation and awareness of the services of the Lexington Bluegrass Mobility office. The promotional plan will include carpools, vanpools, transit, bicycling, walking, and telecommuting. Marketing products will include such items as customized site-specific surveys, information folders, Ozone handbooks, brochures and promotional items. Other promotional expenses will include the media and broadcast costs for the public awareness campaign. A primary component

of marketing the Mobility Office is improved public awareness of the services offered by the Geo Match computer information system. Geo Match is a geographic based system that matches people with carpools, vanpools, and provides transit information. This system needs continued maintenance, training, and updating to facilitate the day-to-day operation of the Mobility Office.

An important incentive for people to try alternative methods of transportation is the establishment of a Guaranteed Ride Home Program (GRHP). The GRHP, established in FY '99, takes the anxiety out of leaving your car at home. People that carpool or vanpool will no longer need to worry about being stranded at work, without a car, when they have an emergency.

Ground level ozone is a significant problem in many U.S. cities with automobiles producing more polluted air than any other source. Continued urban growth in the Lexington MPO has significantly increased the vehicle miles traveled (VMTs), with a corresponding increase in the ground level ozone. Projected growth in the Lexington area indicates this trend will continue. In addition, more stringent air quality standards adopted by the Federal Government in August 1997 emphasize the importance of addressing the air quality. See Section 4.4.5 for more information on Air Quality.



In light of air quality concerns, the MPO promotes a voluntary Ozone Reduction Program. This increases public awareness of the effects of ground level ozone and may include formation of a public/private Ozone Prevention Coalition. The ozone prevention activities are coordinated with and further promote the activities and work elements of the

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Mobility Office. The Mobility Office will continue to promote an array of ozone reduction commute options. This includes carpooling, vanpooling, transit, telecommuting, walking and bicycling.

The Mobility Office intends to continue expansion of the very successful Lex Van Commuter Vanpool Program. This will include the purchase of new vehicles for the Lex Van fleet. This expansion is expected to include an average of five new passenger vans per Fiscal Year. Another focus of the Lex Van Program will be to build upon the initial success of the Lex Van Welfare-to-Work transportation program. The Mobility Office will provide assistance to governmental, social service, and other community organizations that are addressing the problems associated with welfare reform. The office will seek to continually improve coordination of transportation services required by these groups.

The Mobility Office will work with the Lexington Transit Authority on the implementation of an Employer Tax Benefit Commute Program. Initial work is expected to include identifying an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) for each of the 50 largest employers. These individuals would help organize employee meetings, rideshare fairs, and distribute mobility surveys. Education/promotion efforts and ridesharing surveys will also focus on major employers in the community.

### 8.5 BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ELEMENT

Concerns about traffic congestion and air quality are increasing both locally and nationally. In the search for solutions, there is an emerging realization that bicycling and walking are legitimate alternatives to motorized modes of transportation. Lexington has a number of traits that typically characterize cities with a higher than average potential for increased utilitarian bicycling. The most predominant of these include a moderate climate, the presence of a large university, a high proportion of the population commuting five miles or less, and an approach to land use which favors compact development.

Taking advantage of this potential will require concerted efforts to overcome the barriers to bicycle travel. Municipalities with a comprehensive bicycle plan have a much better chance of developing bicycle facilities and programs than communities that use a piecemeal approach. The purpose of the bicycle and pedestrian components of the Lexington Area MPO Year 2025 Transportation Plan is to establish guidelines and strategies that will allow bicycling and walking to truly become viable transportation options for our communities.



Providing for non-motorized travel is an important element of the overall transportation system. Increasing the levels of bicycle and pedestrian trip making can have a positive impact on air quality and traffic congestion. A transportation system that is well designed and constructed to safely and conveniently accommodate both motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation creates additional travel options for individuals.

The Year 2025 Transportation Plan recommends a two-tiered approach to improving conditions for bicycling and walking in the MPO area. On one tier, this plan supports the creation of greenways and other off-street facilities. The MPO staff played an important role in the development of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Greenway Plan (November 1992), which established guidelines for the creation of an interconnected greenway trail system comprised of both on-street and off-street facilities. While greenways are primarily recreational in function, they can also be used for transportation purposes. When completed, the greenway system will provide bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to major destinations throughout the Lexington urban area. Facilities that

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could be considered for this tier include signed bike routes, bike paths and multi-use paths. The 1992 *Greenway Plan* is currently being updated and expanded and is slated for adoption in early 2002. The MPO staff will continue to work with the Greenspace Planner and relevant Divisions to ensure coordination occurs between greenway projects and bike and pedestrian way planning.

The second tier of the MPO's strategy involves examining the system as a whole and recommending specific facilities or treatments for improving bicycling conditions. This tier will focus primarily on collector and arterial routes and will be aimed at increasing utilitarian and commuter bicycling. Facilities that could be considered for this tier include bike lanes, wide curb lanes, and paved shoulders.

In addition to this two-tiered approach, the 2025 *Plan* also recommends the use of support facilities and system-wide improvements such as:

- Increased bicycle parking
- Installing bicycle racks on buses
- Bicycle friendly traffic signals, drainage grates, and railroad crossings
- Improving problems with sight distance
- Better attention to pavement quality and maintenance, especially along routes with high bike travel
- Integrating bicycle factors into the travel demand forecasting model

In late 1999, the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was formed in response to a recommendation of the *Year 2018 Transportation Plan Update*. The purpose of the BPAC is to provide advice, technical guidance and recommendations to the MPO related to carrying out the MPO's goals and objectives. Specific goals and objectives relate to bicycling and walking in order to promote these modes as part of a continuing, comprehensive, coordinated and multimodal transportation planning process. The primary responsibilities of the BPAC are as follows:

 Develop, review, and comment on proposed goals, objectives and policies for the MPO bicycle and pedestrian transportation planning process.

- Review and provide input to the development of all MPO short and longrange transportation plans, studies and other work elements, as required by the MPO bicycle and pedestrian planning process.
- Facilitate coordination, communication and understanding between the public, policy/decision makers, transportation related agencies, and all other parties involved in or affected by the MPO bicycle and pedestrian planning process.
- Provide a forum for citizen input and participation on bicycling and pedestrian issues.
- Serve as a resource and information support group to the MPO, its Committees, and the public.
- Develop and implement action plans to accomplish the bicycle and pedestrian related goals and objectives of the Transportation Plan and other related plans and policies adopted by the MPO.
- Make policy recommendations to the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) regarding bicycling and pedestrian issues.
- Facilitate Federal, State, and other funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs.

In support of the adopted goals of providing a balanced and coordinated multi-modal transportation system and encouraging the use of all viable modes of transportation, the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee has reviewed the proposed transportation projects for the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan* and has recommended potential bicycle/pedestrian treatments to enhance the *Year 2025 Plan* projects. These treatments are listed in detail in Chapter 6 (Plan Recommendations) of the *Year 2025 Transportation Plan*.

#### 8.6 GOODS MOVEMENT PLANS

The adopted highway plan is intended to serve truck carriers for the efficient movement and supply of goods, as well as to serve passenger automobiles

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and other types of vehicles. Newtown Pike from I-64/I-75 is one of Fayette County's most utilized truck routes. A project to improve this corridor was moved up in the 2025 Plan from 2009 to 2005. To date, the Lexington area MPO does not appear to have severe truck carrier problems and conflicts. However, to relieve conflict between truck traffic and areas of the community where truck traffic is inappropriate, it is recommended to continue the existing methods explained in Chapter 3 (Existing Transportation System) of the 2025 Plan. These methods include: sign restriction of truck movements; enforcement; established truck route systems (by city ordinances); on and off-street loading/unloading zones, facilities, restrictions and regulations. These methods should be expanded or revised when needed. When the need arises, urban goods movement must be made a larger component of the area's transportation planning process. Truck traffic problems will be continually monitored through the transportation planning process. All Lexington MPO area committees and government agencies involved with various aspects of transportation, as well as citizens, have input into the existing planning process. It has been suggested that further research should be conducted regarding federal regulations and overnight accommodation needs for truck drivers passing through Fayette County, as they may impact land use plans near interchanges.

## 8.7 AVIATION IMPROVEMENT PLANS

For complete and comprehensive information on aviation in the Lexington planning area, refer to the 1995 *Blue Grass Airport Master Plan Update*. This document, created by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Airport Board, contains detailed

information on the existing airport, future projections, plan alternatives, and recommendations. It is currently being updated and is slated for completion in the near future. MPO staff and Bluegrass Airport staff coordinate on projects that impact both jurisdictions. For discussion of the Airport Rural Activity Center and related land use issues, see Section 6.3.4; and for discussion of the Versailles Road Corridor Study, see Section 6.5.7 of this *Plan Update*.

#### 8.8 PASSENGER RAIL

Analysis prepared for the previous two transportation plan updates indicated that passenger rail was not a feasible transportation alternative for the Lexington area at that time. That finding continues to hold true today and the outlook is expected to remain the same through the planning period. After the 2018 Plan, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC) examined the possibility of interurban passenger rail service in more detail. As discussed in the full 2025 Plan, the consultant's study in 1999 indicated that passenger rail was not a viable option for this area. This assessment is related to low population density and low concentration of urban development, combined with the high capital and operating costs associated with developing a passenger rail system. Transit promoting websites report that throughout the United States, only 3 of the 28 metropolitan areas with populations between one and two million people have, or are seriously planning, commuter rail or light rail systems. No community with less than 1 million persons (now or anticipated in the near future) is reported to be proposing a new system at this time. Nonetheless, the feasibility of Rapid Bus Transit may be examined in future updates of the transportation plan, as funding becomes available. This option would provide a dedicated route for bus use, ensure the frequency of service, and eliminate traffic barriers.

The 2025 Plan recommends that if continued analysis of the feasibility for development of AMTRAK and inter-urban passenger rail service in Central Kentucky occurs, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Division of Multi-modal Programs should lead this effort.

### 8.9 COLLECTOR ROAD SYSTEM

At the local planning level, decisions are made about road locations and layout primarily during the comprehensive plan process and the development plan review process. To assure adequate connections to the major road system, existing and proposed collector roads are shown on the detailed land use maps. They illustrate approximate locations

to be refined during the development process and to be constructed as part of the development. For proper traffic flows within neighborhoods and for adequate pedestrian and bicycle movement opportunities, additional interconnecting streets and paths are critical and should be constructed during development.

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